

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD

In the Matter of Water Quality Certification for the

**PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY
SPRING GAP-STANISLAUS HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT**

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION PROJECT NO. 2130

SOURCES: Middle and South Forks of the Stanislaus River and Tributaries

COUNTY: Tuolumne

Introduction

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E or Licensee) applied to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for a new license for the Spring Gap-Stanislaus Project (Project). The Project is located on the Middle and South Forks of the Stanislaus River in the Stanislaus National Forest near the town of Strawberry. The existing Spring Gap-Stanislaus Project is composed of four developments: Relief, Strawberry (Pinecrest Lake), Spring Gap, and Stanislaus as described in the Application for New License dated December 2002, that have a combined installed capacity of 87.9 megawatts. The Project includes the removal of the Stanislaus Afterbay Dam that poses a threat to the public.

Before FERC can issue a new license for the Project, PG&E must obtain water quality certification under section 401 of the Clean Water Act from the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) (33 U.S.C. § 1341). The State Water Board must certify that the Project will comply with the applicable provisions of the Clean Water Act, including water quality standards set forth in the Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basin (Basin Plan). The Basin Plan designates the beneficial uses of waters to be protected along with the water quality objectives necessary to protect those uses that together are the water quality standards. The Basin Plan lists municipal and domestic supply, agricultural supply, hydropower generation, water contact recreation, non-contact water recreation, warm freshwater habitat, cold freshwater habitat, and wildlife habitat as beneficial uses for the Stanislaus River above New Melones Reservoir. The State Water Board analyzes the Project's overall effect on water quality and includes conditions in the certification, if necessary, to adequately protect the designated beneficial uses identified in the Basin Plan.

Stanislaus Planning Action Team

The Stanislaus Planning Action Team (SPLAT) was a collaborative group formed by PG&E and Tri-Dam Project to help interested parties develop recommended resource measures for the Spring Gap-Stanislaus, Beardsley/Donnells, Tulloch, and Donnells-Curtis Projects. In late 2003 and early 2004, the SPLAT participants reached consensus on recommended resource measures for the Spring Gap-Stanislaus Project. The concurring SPLAT participants (which